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[McKee, Alan](#) & [Dore, Johanna](#) (2013) Pro-Am curators of Australian television history : how is their practice different from that of professional television historians? *Australasian Journal of Popular Culture*. (In Press)

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# **Pro-Am curators of Australian television history: how is their practice different from that of professional television historians?**

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## **Abstract**

Eleven Pro-Am curators of Australian television history were interviewed about their practice. The data helps us to understand the relationship between professional and Pro-Am approaches to Australian television history. There is no simple binary – the lines are blurred – but there are some differences. Pro-Am curators of Australian television history are not paid for their work and present other motivations for practice – particularly being that ‘weird child’ who was obsessed with gathering information and objects related to television. They have freedom to curate only programs and genres that interest them, and they tend to collect merchandise as much as program texts themselves. And they have less interest in formally cataloguing their material than do professional curators of Australian television history.

## **Keywords**

- television
- Australian television history
- popular collecting
- popular curating
- Pro-am
- media

## **Bios**

Alan McKee is a Professor in the Creative Industries Faculty at Queensland University of Technology. His books include *Australian Television: a genealogy of great moments* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

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## **Pro-Am curators of Australian television history: how is their practice different from the work of professional television historians?**

### **Pro-Am curators of Australian television history**

In considering the practice of popular collectors, Thomas Tanselle writes:

If one wishes to think seriously about the nature of [popular] collecting, one has no choice but to ponder human psychology, for collecting often causes people to seem driven by uncontrollable urges that they cannot rationally explain (Tanselle 1999: 28)

Throughout the literature on popular collecting can be found similar attempts to pathologize the practice (Halperin and Glick 2005: 558; Belk et al. 1988: 549; Shuker 2004: 320). In this paper we consider the practice of popular collectors – or as we have chosen to describe them, Pro-Am curators<sup>1</sup> – of Australian television history, in order to examine the ways in which their work is similar to, and different from, that of professional historians. We propose that in examining the relationship between the Pro and the Pro-Am it becomes clear that it is not useful to describe one set of practices as rational and the other as pathological. This is not to deny that there are differences between the practices – but in order to describe these it is not necessary to imagine Pro-Am curators as an ‘other’ (Said 1995).

The article emerges from a research project funded by the Australian Research Council entitled *Australian television and popular memory: new approaches to the cultural history of the media in the project of nation-building*. This project aims to:

construct histories of Australian television from the point of view of those who have made and consume it, in order to describe and understand the part that television has played in the popular experience of a national culture

One focus for the project is the practice of Pro-Am curators of Australian television history. These Pro-Am curators (the term is taken from Leadbeater and Miller 2004)) are people who collect Australian television history materials: information about old programs, copies of those programs, memorabilia and

production materials. They are not formally trained in history, archiving or curatorship; nor are they employed by any recognised professional institution. They collect for their own interest, pleasure or fun, but do so 'to professional standards' (9). This is a leisure activity rather than paid work.

For this project eleven Pro-Am curators of Australian television history were interviewed – Chris Keating, Andrew Bayley, Nigel Giles, Milton Hammon, Garry Hardman, Andrew Mercado, Troy Walters and four who wished to remain anonymous. There exists an extensive literature on popular collecting, examining the nature of the relationship between collectors and their collections. One tradition of this work explores collecting as 'a process that mediates between the subject (the collector) and object (that which has been collected), whether that object be tangible or an abstract idea or image' (Walker 2008: 36; see also Benjamin 1968; Pearce 1992: 412; Bal 1994). Another tradition is interested in the motivations of popular collectors (see, for example, Rohan 2010; Walker 2008; Gelber 1992; Clifford 1994). In this paper we are particular interested in the 'Pro-Am' nature of these collectors:

A Pro-Am pursues an activity as an amateur, mainly for the love of it, but sets a professional standard. Pro-Ams are unlikely to earn more than a small proportion of their income from their pastime but they pursue it with the dedication and commitment associated with a professional. For Pro-Ams, leisure is not passive consumerism but active and participatory (Leadbeater and Miller 2004: 20)

Our interviews with Pro-Am historians of Australian television raised interesting issues about the similarities and differences between popular and professional collectors. Three key differences emerged. The first, tautologically, is that Pro-Am curators are not paid for their practice – which leads to other motivations for their curating. The second is that the Pro-Ams have the luxury of only curating material that has some resonance for them. The third is a lack of interest in cataloguing their collections – which we think bears some discussion as a key point of differentiation between professional and Pro-Am Australian curators of television history.

## **The blurry line between Pro and Pro-Am**

It is worth starting by noting that there is no absolute binary between professional and Pro-Am curators. It is true that, as Martin notes:

there exist[t] two mutually exclusive worlds of environments in which collecting activity happened; one, professionalized and socially approved (museums); the other (popular collecting) totally without perimeters and regarded with caution or suspicion by the museum and antiquities establishments (Martin 1999)

But he goes on to suggest that this is not a productive binary: that if popular collecting is 'compared with museum collecting, there seems to be more commonality than difference' (Martin 1999: 10) and that 'sociologically and museologically ... popular collecting can tell us a great deal about ourselves' (Martin 1999: xi).

The line between professional and amateur in our interviews was blurred. There are gradations within the Pro-Am community. Several of the popular curators had also done professional work in the area of television history, either paid or pro-bono. Giles and Bayley helped a museum organize an exhibition celebrating 50 years of Australian television, and Giles records oral histories for the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia. Hammon provided footage to the Australian Recording Industry Association Hall of Fame, and made money from a pub quiz game based around old music videos. One anonymous interviewee provides 'the service of researching and tracking down the material, the restoration and all of that' for commercial television producers. Keating has: 'helped out on a few TV shows over the years, helped out on a few books, a radio program here and there, co-authored for a couple of books myself'. Two of the interviewees have media studies degrees. The most successful in parlaying his amateur interest into paid work is Andrew Mercado, who works in television as an entertainment reporter and commentator:

I guess I am one of the few people that was able to convert that away from kind of obsessive fandom and try and put a more ... 'research' side to it. And ultimately it helped me with what I ended up doing later on in life,

becoming a film critic and a TV commentator... my entire career in television, I can probably owe to my fascination with the TV series, *Number 96* ... I was always obsessed by *Number 96* and eventually [pay TV channel] TV1 took notice and got me to hand-pick three weeks' worth of episodes for a series they did, 'the best of *Number 96*', for which I did the introductions. And then that TV series led to Pluto Press approaching me and saying, you know a lot about *Number 96*, do you know about any other soaps, which was kind of a silly question - yes, I did. And they asked me to write a book on the subject ... *Super Aussie Soaps*. And then the book led to Umbrella Entertainment approaching me and saying, look we want to start releasing some of these shows on DVD. Can you act as a consultant for us and watch what we do

Interestingly, we could also explore this binary from the opposite direction: if we see Mercado as a professional curator (in that he is paid for much of this work), then we could also suggest gradations within the professional category, shading into the Pro-Am. How many readers of this journal, although paid by Universities or other knowledge institutions for at least some of their work, also conduct research outside of their paid work, or outside of their areas of formally accredited expertise?

As Martin notes there has traditionally been a strained relationship between professional and amateur archivists and historians. Some researchers have suggested that these relationships are beginning to improve (Pearce 1992: 113) and that 'some museums are cautiously beginning to acknowledge collecting' (Martin 1999: x). However they also note that a:

significant shift in purpose for museums is still ... required if popular culture is to be taken seriously as a topic in its own right, and not merely a few exceptional aspects included in the museum if their artistic or historical significance can be 'authenticated' (Moore 1997: 4)

In these interviews there was little evidence of conflict between the Pro-Ams and the professionals. In Australia the National Film and Sound Archive is, says Hammon, 'very good, they've been terrific ... nothing less than fantastic ... their service is good'. Mercado notes that they 'couldn't have been more helpful to me

when I was researching the book', even if, as Keating puts it - the institution is 'chronically understaffed and underpaid and under resourced'.

Nevertheless, as noted above, it became clear from the interviews that there are differences between professional and Pro-Am curators of Australian television history.

### **Motivations for collecting**

In analyzing the similarities and differences between professional and Pro-Am curating of Australian television history it would be possible to address a wide range of issues. One area would be the organization of work practices: how much time do people spend on their practice each day? Do they work regular hours? Another would be professional networks: do there exist communities of practitioners? Do they exchange information in a regular or systematic way? Forms of training and recognition of knowledge would also bear consideration: is there any equivalent in Pro-Am communities to the accreditation that exists for professional workers. In our analysis, we chose to be guided by the comments of the Pro-Am curators themselves. We did not want to set up the professional communities as the norm, and then to judge the Pro-Am curators against them, assessing them only in terms of 'lack'. Three key points emerged. The fact that Pro-Am curators of Australian television history are not paid for their work led them to present other motivations for practice. Their freedom to curate only programs and genres that interest them was key to their practice. And their limited interest in formally cataloguing their material represented a different relationship with their collections to that of professional curators.

The first point – the motivations for their collecting – makes clear the importance of avoiding an approach that sets up professional practice as the norm against which other practices are judged and found to be wanting. In the literature about popular collecting there exists disagreement about the existence of a financial motivation. On the one hand some studies insist that for popular collectors the material that is collected does not have a 'utilitarian' function (Pearce 1994: 159):



the function of the collection in sacralizing formerly ordinary objects is aided by these objects being removed from the sphere of commodity exchange and also from their ordinary utilitarian roles .... Hoarding items merely for their investment value is not collecting because it involves a utilitarian reason for the accumulation (Belk et al. 1988: 550)

But other researchers of popular collecting insist that there is a financial element involved in it. Baudrillard, for example, suggests that:

Collecting proper ... aspires to discriminate *between* objects, privileging those which have some exchange value or which are also 'objects' of conservation, of commerce, of social ritual, of display – possibly which are even a source of profit (Baudrillard 1994: 22)

Baekeland, indeed, goes so far as to suggest that an awareness of commercial value is a defining element of (art) 'collectors' as opposed to mere 'accumulators' (Baekeland 1994: 205).

The popular archivists and historians of Australian television interviewed for our project did not see their collections in terms of exchange value. As Hammon put it, there's 'no money in it for me, of course, but it's a love so you wear those things'. Giles says that 'People say, why don't you sell the stuff on ebay ... I don't do it for monetary gain'. Bayley notes that 'I haven't really considered that side of it at all'. For Keating:

There's no real hope of making any sort of windfall out of it ... it's not money I'm doing it for. It's just I really, really enjoy finding information about TV programmes, I like knowing about them. It just fascinates me.

In place of financial gain, researchers of popular collecting have suggested a range of other possible reasons for collecting. Pearce, for example, identifies seventeen possible motivations:

leisure, aesthetics, competition, risk, fantasy, a sense of community, prestige, domination, sensual gratification, sexual foreplay, desire to reframe objects, the pleasing rhythm of sameness and difference, ambition to achieve perfection, extending the self, reaffirming the body, producing gender identity, achieving immortality (cited in (Martin 1999))

As we noted at the start of this article, one particular tendency emerges in writing about the motivations of popular collectors: the use of a binary whereby the work of professionals is understood to be rational, driven by objective accounts of value, while the practice of Pro-Ams is pathologized as being driven by emotion and personal interest. As we noted above, Tanselle suggests that:

If one wishes to think seriously about the nature of [popular] collecting, one has no choice but to ponder human psychology, for collecting often causes people to seem driven by uncontrollable urges that they cannot rationally explain (Tanselle 1999: 28)

Several writers on popular collecting fall into this trap, seeing popular collecting as an aberrant practice which ‘may share many characteristics of an addiction’ (Halperin and Glick 2005: 558), and in need of some psychological explanation. Collectors, in this discourse, look for their next ‘fix’ (Belk et al. 1988: 549) and their practices can be described as ‘unhealthy’ or ‘obsessive’ (Belk 1988: 155). In a similar spirit of psychological assessment researchers have noted the emotional investment of popular collectors in their materials. For example, they describe the ‘fear’ that collectors experience in the face of the possibility of completing their collection (Shuker 2004: 320).

We think this tradition of research is misguided, proposing as it does a simplistic binary between the motivations of professional and Pro-Am collectors. We suspect that most professional historians of Australian television also have some personal interest and investment in the area. We would propose that very few of us do it simply for the money.

As we argue that it is not useful to understand popular collecting in terms of pathology, some readers may be wondering what evidence we can produce (perhaps from our interviews) to prove that this is not the case. Are the decisions made by the Pro-Ams all rational? Is the material they decide to collect all equally useful? Or their decisions equally valid? However, as Matt Hills has argued in relation to the practice of fans – it is not helpful to ‘other’ popular collectors, in a ‘separation of “good” rationality and “bad” cultism’ (Hills 2002: 5). From this perspective questions about the whether Pro-Ams are ‘really’ obsessive tend to reinforce the binary whereby fans are open to challenges to

their motivations, while professional practitioners are not subjected to such scrutiny. Are all decisions made by professional collectors equally valid? Are all of their collections equally useful? Questions about obsessiveness and pathology may as equally be asked of professional as of Pro-Am curators of Australian television history – or of neither group.

The Australian Pro-Am television curators interviewed for this project offered as an explanation of their practice narratives of a lifelong tendency to be the kind of person who is fascinated by gathering information and objects related to television. This is the story of the ‘weird child’ (as one of the anonymous interviewees puts it):

I’ve been doing it since very early on ... I always wanted to record stuff on tape, I was a weird child. So I started as a kid... I can’t bear to tape over things – I’ve never been able to do it

In this use of language we can see that it is not just theorists of popular collecting who pathologise popular curators: obviously the discourses that are available in wider culture create a similar sense of ‘othering’ for people who love collecting (although these popular discourses may not distinguish between professional and Pro-Am geeks). For Andrew Mercado:

For some reason, I was always completely fascinated by movies and television, and at that stage when I was collecting stuff and putting it in scrapbooks it was seen as quite a worrying event, you know. And my mother had a huge problem with it that this was going to create a kind of pattern for future life, and no one could see that you could possibly get anything positive out of that. It was seen as a negative that you might become sort of a lonely old person in the future obsessively gluing things into scrapbooks

Another anonymous interviewee states that: ‘I’ve *always* been collecting! ... I just started collecting things here and there until it started to get a bit out of hand’. Other interviewees didn’t explicitly label themselves as ‘weird’, ‘worrying’ or ‘out of hand’, but still made clear that their interest in collecting had appeared at an early age. Giles recalls that:

When I was far too young to be watching *Number 96* (a raunchy Australian adult soap opera) I was watching it five nights a week, and I loved it ... I had scrapbooks too. I used to get *TV Week* and *TV Times* (Australian listings magazines), and I used to cut out mainly *Number 96* stuff

Bayley notes that:

my parents bought me a *25 Years [of TV]* book for my 12<sup>th</sup> birthday ... and I'd always had an interest. I'd always read the TV magazines and things like that. My grandmother used to always buy them and give them to me, so I always just used to read them, and occasionally I'd keep a few ... As I got older ... I sort of just started collecting them

These accounts do not present an explanation for collecting *per se* (as Mercado's 'for some reason' makes clear). Rather they point towards a sense of self, an identity for those people who are interested in gathering material – information and objects – about television. For these collectors their childhood archiving of information and objects (in scrapbooks and collections) led to an interest in the history of television.

### **Choices of material**

Pro-Am curators of Australian television history have the luxury of collecting only that material which has a personal resonance for them. One of the common themes of research into popular collectors is that collecting is an 'identity-forming process' (Rohan 2010: 56), that 'the collector's taste is a mirror of self' (Elsner and Cardinal 1994: 3) and the materials collected are 'an important component of sense of self' (Belk 1988: 139):

someone cannot excuse a collection by saying, 'Well, I just happened to pick that up somewhere', or 'someone gave that to me'. Because a collection results from purposeful acquisition and retention, it announces identity traits with far greater clarity and certainty than the many other objects owned (Belk and Wallendorf 1994: 240)

This was clearly the case for Pro-Am historians of Australian television. McKee has noted elsewhere that, unlike Australia's National and Film and Sound Archive:

I have found in the Pro-Am archive collections detailing and recording copies of drama series, soap operas, music variety programs and sitcoms – but I have not found any committed to documentaries, current affairs or arts programs. It is unworthy, ordinary, everyday genres which are most at the heart of the Pro-Am version of Australian television (McKee 2012: 309)

The interviewees made explicit that this was driven by their personal interests. For one anonymous interviewee: 'I like gathering it, and then having a look and seeing if any of it interests me. And if it does I keep it'. As Giles puts it:

My main interest is *Number 96*, *Prisoner*, I love that as well. So I'll gladly add anything of that genre to my collection. But I'm not fanatical ... I don't have to cover every aspect of Australian television from 1956 to 1990

As Walker et al note 'collectors become authors, constructing a narrative that links the objects they have collected to their identity as it has unfolded in time' (Walker 2008: 37). There is a complex and ambivalent relationship for Pro-Ams between their personal life histories and their objects of interest. Some tell stories of early childhood passions that continue, and of a collecting practice which allows an ongoing relationship with childhood. As Hammon puts it:

For me, it's mainly music. You look at Brian Henderson's *Bandstand*, which went for a long time. In Melbourne, there's *Your Hit Parade*, which was a rip off of an American show ... *The Johnny O'Keefe Show*, *Six O'Clock Rock*... *Teen Scene*,... *The Go Show* ... all those shows, just fantastic. Well, I grew up on *Uptight* and *Happening*<sup>2</sup>. I was born in '53, it was when I was 14, 15, I really started getting into music, it was my younger sister ... she was nearly 10, but she was so much about the Beatles coming out, drove me crazy. But you couldn't help it, it was infectious

But at the same time some emphasize that their interests are not limited by nostalgia. For Keating:

I really get excited when I come across something I remember from my childhood. I found a clip on YouTube last week for the Archie and Sabrina cartoon show (*The New Archie and Sabrina Hour*), which I remembered vividly from when I was a child, and no one else remembered it. I actually searched for it, and finally saw it put up on YouTube. It was precisely the way I remembered it from when I was like seven years old, even down to the fonts they were using on screen, and just fabulous, marvellous; I love that sort of stuff. But the fact that I don't necessarily remember something from my childhood or if it's from before I was born, it doesn't matter if would I be interested in it. I may even be interested in it more

Another interviewee, born in 1987, noted that:

I have a whole shelf of stuff set aside from the 80's – for some reason I enjoy that, because it seems so far-removed for me. It's interesting because it seems like it was such a long time ago for me

As noted above, the lines between professional and Pro-Am are blurry, and 'compared with museum collecting, there seems to be more commonality than difference' (Martin 1999: 10). It is true that those of us who are paid to conduct research into Australian television history as a professional career may not have quite the same degree of luxury to only study what we want. There are points where the conditions of our employment require us to lead studies into, or to teach about, programs, genres or topics that may not particularly interest us. But we do not want to overemphasize this difference. As historians and curators we have at least a degree of flexibility to follow our interests, design research projects and collections around our personal interests. But in the case of professionals, that flexibility is not absolute. On this basis, the difference between professional and Pro-Am historians should perhaps be conceptualized not in terms of a psychopathology on the part of popular collectors but in terms of a positive benefit of their practice. They have the freedom only to pursue material that interests them.

It is also interesting to note that the collections of these Pro-Am curators has as much focus on merchandise as on broadcast texts themselves. While the collection of Australia's National Film and Sound Archive, for example, primarily

focuses on the programs, Pro-Am curators of Australian television history commonly collect both programs and merchandise. These are commonly talked about as a single collection: interviewees didn't make a distinction between their 'program' collection and their 'merchandise' collection – suggesting an approach to Australian television history which includes ancillary texts and the cultures built up around programs as much as the programs themselves.

## **Cataloguing**

One point where there was a clear distinction between professional and Pro-Am practice was in practices of cataloguing. While all of the interviewees had a clear idea of what was in their collections, the extent to which that was formalized varied greatly. For several of them their catalogue was internalized. One anonymous interviewee 'keep[s] a catalogue in my mind'. Mercado and one other interviewee keep their catalogues 'in my head'. For these interviewees there is a spatial and visual system of information organization and recovery. Mercado went to find a magazine in the course of the interview. When he later discussed his cataloguing system he noted that:

you saw me go into a huge pile of magazines like that and I went through them and got that out, looking for the pink side cover, and I knew it would be a stapled issue and not binding and all of that.

Similarly another interviewee notes that 'I remember the labels and things ... I have a row that's just kind of tapes from the 80's'. Other interviewees had partial catalogues. Walters does 'keep a catalogue of my programs, but I go by DVD not by clips'. Keating has catalogued his collection of TV listings magazines – 'I keep track of which ones I haven't got' – although he doesn't catalogue his copies of programs as 'I know what I have got, so I don't really need the catalogue'. Hammon has the most extensively catalogued collection of the Pro-Am historians interviewed:

All the material on the DVDs is listed on a database, Excel spreadsheet ...over 40,000 clips ... name of the song, the artist, the year it came out ...

categories ... [*Young Talent Time*] reference [codes], the recording date, the airing date, who performed in it ...

Most of the interviewees expressed regret that their collections were not more fully catalogued – ‘No, I’d love to’ (Giles) - often in terms of the amount of time it would involve – ‘it’s such a time-consuming job to catalogue everything’ as one anonymous interviewee puts it. But if popular collectors of television history are driven by their passions it seems clear that outside of professional institutions cataloguing is not the main passion of television researchers.

The image of the popular collecting can be of ‘an obsession and a compulsion’ (Belk et al. 1988: 549). This does not match up particularly well with a lack of interest in cataloguing the materials. But perhaps Belk is correct when he suggests that ‘the fun is in the hunt and acquisition rather than in the possession of a collection’ (Belk et al. 1988: 552).

On the other hand it may be that in the world of Pro-Am curating of Australian television history cataloguing occurs at the networked level rather than the individual. YouTube, in this respect, may represent a fundamental shift in the nature of Pro-Am practice. McKee has written on the usefulness of the Pro-Am archive YouTube as an archive for historians of Australian television, noting that the cataloguing of YouTube is in some ways superior to that of the National Film and Sound Archive: ‘YouTube is more intuitive when searching for particular items – one types in what one would ask another human being, and this often produces the correct item’ (McKee 2011: 168). On this point it is perhaps worth emphasizing that in the world of professional curating of Australian television history, cataloguing is often an institutional rather than a personal practice. Perhaps the increased networking of Pro-Am historians allowed by the Internet is leading to the emergence of cataloguing practices. It may be that it is unfair to compare the National Film and Sound Archive with the practices of individual Pro-Am historians; it may be fairer to compare it with YouTube and similarly networked institutions. YouTube has allowed for the Pro-Am collection of Australian television history to emerge as a networked whole, greater than the sum of the individual collections from which it is built. It has allowed a community of users to develop metadata, thus making their collections



searchable and accessible in a way that was not previously the case. In some ways it may be that YouTube has pushed the work of these curators more firmly towards the Pro end of the Pro-Am spectrum.

## **Conclusion**

Analyses of popular collecting have often proposed that in order to understand the practice it is necessary to pathologize the collectors. Our analysis of the practice of popular collectors – or, as we prefer to name them, Pro-Am curators – of Australian television history suggests that this is not the case.

There exist a number of authorized institutions with the authority to write histories of Australian television: academic publishers, galleries and museums, libraries and archives (Hartley, Green and Burgess 2008: 227). But there also exist other forms of television history – those gathered by television's viewers and fans, amateur accounts that might look quite different from formal versions of the medium's history. Pro-Am curators of Australian television history present an account of the medium which is quite different from that presented by the formal institutions (McKee 2012). And, as we have argued, they also conduct the practice of curating Australian television programs quite differently. They are not paid for their practice and so offer a range of other motivations for their practice. This fact allows them to be strongly selective – they have the freedom only to curate material that speaks to them personally. And they are less interested in formal cataloguing than are the governmental institutions of Australian television history. Despite the claims of the writers who have cast popular collecting in terms of individual psychology and pathology, our interviews suggest that there is no simple binary between professional and Pro-Am. Ultimately we are all involved in the same project. Driven by their passion and love for the medium, the practice of Pro-Ams is an important contribution to our understanding of the history of Australian television and its programs.

In this article we have written about Pro-Am curators of Australian television history, exploring how their practice is similar from, and different from, that of professional historians of television. As we consider the conclusions from this

research, it is worth noting that we did not describe these interviewees as 'fans'. Why was this?

Partly the decision to describe these practitioners as 'curators' rather than 'fans' was related to our interest in their 'Pro-Am' status: it feels odd to write about 'Pro-Am fans' as there remains in the term 'fan' an implication of amateur status. In addition, the literature on fan studies raises questions about the practice of these Pro-Ams that were not of primary interest to our study. It is true that there exists in fan studies a similar discussion about the 'othering' of fandom by professional academics who study similar forms of culture (Hills 2002: 5). However, fan scholarship has also focused on a number of other topics in which we are not so interested: whether fandom is a form of resistance to the work of mass capitalism cultural production, for example (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington 2007: 2); or the power relations within fan cultures themselves (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington 2007: 6). As Gray et al note, these questions form part of the first and second wave of fan studies (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington 2007) and we have explained elsewhere why we are not particularly interested in engaging in these debates (McKee 2007). We hope that the very fact that we discuss these practices under the heading of 'Pro-Am curation' rather than 'fandom' represents, in itself, a useful contribution to these ongoing debates.

## **Acknowledgements**

The research for this article was supported by the ARC Discovery grant DP0879596 'Australian television and popular memory: new approaches to the cultural history of the media in the project of nation-building'.

Thanks to Peter Cox at the Powerhouse Museum, Chris Harris at ACMI, Nathalie Anghoustine of the Media Archives Project, Larry Boxshall, Andrew Mercado and all the Pro-Am collectors of Australian television history materials who were interviewed for this project,

Thanks also to Ben Hamley and Emmy-Lou Quirke for invaluable Research Assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> In this article we have favoured the term ‘curators’ rather than ‘collectors’ as a way of challenging the binary distinction between professionals and amateurs.

<sup>2</sup> A series of shows entitled *Happening 70*, *Happening 71* and *Happening 72*.